

An Interview with

**SANDRA
FREHNER**

*An Oral History produced by
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Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada

Tonopah
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Sandra Frehner
2009

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The Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the tapes of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are *not* history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the NCTHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the NCTHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts, and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherence. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the NCTHP will, in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the *uhs*, *ahs* and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;

- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
- e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into many homes—in many cases as a stranger—and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. In a number of cases I had the opportunity to interview Nye County residents whom I have long known and admired; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and Nevada—too numerous to mention by name—who provided assistance, information, and photographs. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. “Bobby” Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project in 1987. Subsequently, Commissioners Richard L. Carver, Dave Hannigan, and Barbara J. Raper provided support. In this current round of interviews, Nye County Commissioners Andrew Borasky, Roberta “Midge” Carver, Joni Eastley, Gary Hollis, and Peter Liakopoulos provided unyielding support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the program within Nye County in its first years. More recently, Darrell Lacy, Director, Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office, gave his unwavering support. The United States Department of Energy, through Mr. Lacy’s office, provided funds for this round of interviews. Thanks are extended to Commissioner Eastley, Gary Hollis, and Mr. Lacy for their input regarding the conduct of this research and for serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. These interviews would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Lacy.

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—Robert D. McCracken
2009

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the close of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of overnight riches from newly developed lodes, were but a memory.

Although Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that while most of the state was mapped and its geographical features named, a vast region—stretching from Belmont south to the Las Vegas meadows, comprising most of Nye County—remained largely unsettled and unmapped. In 1890, most of southcentral Nevada remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be so for at least another twenty years.

The spectacular mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), Rhyolite (1904), Manhattan (1905), and Round Mountain (1906) represent the last major flowering of what might be called the Old West in the United States. Consequently, southcentral Nevada, notably Nye County, remains close to the American frontier; closer, perhaps, than any other region of the American West. In a real sense, a significant part of the frontier can still be found in southcentral Nevada. It exists in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area also is visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, much of it essentially untouched by humans.

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously since its first year. In contrast, relatively little is known

about the early days of Gabbs, Round Mountain, Manhattan, Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump. Gabbs's only newspaper was published intermittently between 1974 and 1976. Round Mountain's only newspaper, the *Round Mountain Nugget*, was published between 1906 and 1910. Manhattan had newspaper coverage for most of the years between 1906 and 1922. The *Rhyolite Herald*, longest surviving of Rhyolite/Bullfrog's three newspapers, lasted from 1905 to 1912. The *Beatty Bullfrog Miner* was in business from 1905 to 1906. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All these communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities once their own newspapers folded, although Beatty was served by the *Beatty Bulletin*, published as part of the *Goldfield News* between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 resides in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) in 1987. The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, Special Collections in the Lied Library at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community

can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique—some are large, others are small—yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 700 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

On the basis of the oral histories as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories have also been archived.

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impact of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, which would be located inside a mountain (Yucca Mountain), would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions and quality of life of Nye County communities that may be impacted by the repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for a long time and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided at the site. And in the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

—R.D.M.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Sandy, why don't we start by you telling me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

SF: Sandra Gayle Hibbert.

RM: When and where were you born?

SF: In Blythe, California, May 16, 1958.

RM: Could you tell me your mother's name as it would read on her birth certificate?

SF: Jacquelyn Kay McJunkin.

RM: Do you know when and where she was born?

SF: I do. The where is Youngstown, Ohio, and the when is classified information [laughs].

RM: Was she raised in Youngstown?

SF: No, they moved to Blythe, California, when she was very young. Her father passed away when she was four or five years old so my grandmother raised my mother and her brother in Blythe.

RM: And what line of work was her family in?

SF: When they moved to California my grandfather worked for a gas station. It was in a small town about 13 miles from Blythe. When he passed away, my grandmother went to work to support them. She was a widow with two young children and it was very difficult for them.

RM: And what was your father's name?

SF: My father's name was David Proudfit Hibbert.

RM: And Proudfit is a family name?

SF: Yes, it's my grandmother's maiden name. He was born in New Jersey and raised in Texas and California.

RM: And what brought them to California?

SF: My grandparents' health, mostly my grandmother's. My grandfather was on the water board there in Lake Elsinore; he was in real estate and he had a lot to do with bringing water into Lake Elsinore and preserving the lake.

RM: And how did your folks meet?

SF: They met through a friend of my mother's in Blythe. My dad was in the service; he lied about his age to get into the service early.

RM: Did they live in Blythe then?

SF: Yes; my dad had his pilot's license and he was a crop-duster. We didn't live in Blythe long after I was born. We moved to Pahrump because my parents were going to manage the cotton gin.

RM: Had they had experience in cotton besides crop-dusting?

SF: A friend of theirs knew about Pahrump and that someone was needed at the gin. I don't know a lot of my history; I need to find out. [Chuckles]

RM: You're doing fine. So it was the growth of the cotton industry in Pahrump that led to them coming here. And what year did they come, do you know?

SF: Mom said that I was about 18 months old so, the end of '59. Later I heard that my sister Paula was really upset about the move. She was four years older than me and she was ready to start kindergarten and there wasn't one here.

RM: And from then on, were you raised here?

SF: I was raised here until I graduated high school in 1976. In '76, I moved to Las Vegas

and I moved back to Pahrump in 1998 and I've lived here since.

RM: I really want to focus on your growing up in Pahrump. You would have started in school in '64?

SF: Yes, I started first grade in '64.

RM: Describe what Pahrump was like from your child's eyes at that time.

SF: You didn't have to worry about getting abducted; we had all the freedom in the world.

RM: Did you go to the little red school, or that had changed by then?

SF: I was too young for the red school. There was only one school in Pahrump at that time and it is now the Manse Elementary School. I am not sure if it was called Manse back then; I think it was just the Pahrump School. First and second grade were in the same classroom with the same teacher—Mrs. Kunz. For third and fourth grade our teacher was Miss Thomas. In fifth grade Mrs. Hughes taught us. When we got into sixth grade, they split us up and we had different teachers for different classes. I think they were trying to prepare us for high school. We had one or two school buses for the entire valley.

RM: Were you living on the Pahrump Ranch?

SF: No, I lived on the Hafen Ranch. When my mom and Tim Hafen were first married we lived at what we later called the "South Ranch." A few years later they purchased another ranch from the Frehners and we moved there. the "North Ranch." I was raised in the home there.

RM: Do you have any memories of Pahrump as a preschooler?

SF: I have memories, but some of them I wonder is it a memory or something someone told me. Before we had electricity we had generators that ran on fuel. We had a Great Dane dog, Blitz, and one night he was really, really pestering Tim, my dad. He would try to put

him out and Blitz didn't want out. He didn't want food and he didn't want water. Tim realized that it was cold in the house so he went to check the generator. It had run out of fuel. When he came back in the house the dog was asleep. It was just cold and the dog wanted Tim to know that he needed to do something. [Laughs]

I remember not having telephones. There was one pay phone in town at the corner of 372 and 160. It was in a glass booth. One of the reasons I remember that is because I was caught in the middle of a dogfight one afternoon. I got knocked down and one of the concerns was that I might have a concussion. My mom and dad put me in the car and drove me up to that telephone and called our doctor in Las Vegas—in those days you could call them at home. He told them what signs to watch for in case I had a concussion. I was sitting in the car while they were talking to him on the phone saying, “Okay, here’s a flashlight, let’s check your eyes.” So I can remember some of those things.

SF: We were always farming; we had cattle and horses. At times we also had sheep and pigs. We always had a pond to swim in. The Hafen Pond was a very popular place with most of the kids, young and old.

RM: And was that the old Manse pond?

SF: No, it was a pond on our ranch by the house we grew up in. The water came from a well about a mile up the road. It was pumped underground to the pond. It flowed in one end and went out the other end in a ditch. It was used for irrigation.

RM: When did that dry out, just out of curiosity?

SF: It didn't dry up. The well is still there and the water is now being used for a culinary water system.

RM: As a kid you probably weren't aware of this but I am a little confused about . . . as you know, we're doing a book on the Manse Ranch with the Younts. We've got some really

neat pictures from about 1890, which is the absolute beginning of Pahrump as far as I am concerned. The original Manse Ranch wasn't that big and they kept adding to it. And then Perry Bowman came in and he had a lot of it, and Lois Kellogg had a big chunk of it. You mentioned one ranch here; can you describe its configuration?

SF: My dad Tim was born in Mesquite and when it was time for him to go out on his own, he and Grandpa came over here and they bought our original ranch. We later called it the "South Ranch." At one time it was part of the Kellogg Ranch, which belonged to Lois Kellogg.

RM: Oh, so he bought the Kellogg Ranch but he did not buy the Manse?

SF: He bought a portion of the Kellogg Ranch from Elmer Bowman. He did not buy the Manse.

RM: Do you know how many acres the South Ranch has?

SF: About 640 acres.

RM: And the Manse was up which way?

SF: North.

RM: And was Elmer Bowman still here?

SF: I don't know, I don't remember him. I remember Elmer's son Perry and his family. I also knew Digger and Imogene Andersen and their family. Imogene was Perry's sister. Merton and Melvin Bowman were here and they were Elmer's sons too.

RM: Did they farm them as a family ranch or kind of separately?

SF: I only remember Digger and Imogene and Perry and Norma and they farmed separately.

RM: And in your earliest recollection were they growing cotton on these properties? Was that their main crop?

SF: Yes, cotton and alfalfa. We also raised melons, corn and tried growing beets. As a kid we had to go down to the cotton fields and chop the weeds from the cotton.

RM: What do you remember about Perry Bowman and his family?

SF: To me they seemed quiet and hard working. I knew all of their children.

RM: And what about Digger and Imogene?

SF: Digger always had a nickname for everybody; he was a big tease. They had five daughters.

RM: And were you good pals with those girls?

SF: Good pals with Connie. My sister Paula was good pals with Myrna.

RM: How would you describe that family?

SF: They were hard working. Same thing—the girls had to go out in the summertime and chop the weeds in the cotton fields, just like we did. They had cows that they milked.

Imogene would make butter. They always had fresh milk and cream. If you lived on a farm or ranch you had to work.

As it turned out, I ended up marrying a cousin of the Bowman's so Perry and Norma became my aunt and uncle by marriage. My husband, Duane, is Norma's nephew.

RM: And he is a Frehner? They're in construction in a big way, aren't they?

SF: They were big in the construction, concrete and trucking business.

RM: And so you married Duane Frehner. Did you meet him through the Bowmans?

SF: No, I didn't. I met him when I was living in Las Vegas. We met at the facility where I boarded my horse. He ended up being Norma's nephew and then I knew it really was a "small world." What I remember the most about Perry and Norma were the kids. The youngest is Karen and she was a few years older than I am. Their daughter Lorraine was a teacher of mine in elementary school.

We didn't have a lot of television and none of us were old enough to drive. We rode horses and worked in the fields together.

RM: Describe your pond as it was then.

SF: The water was about 72 degrees and the bottom was hard packed dirt. If you didn't touch the bottom it would stay really clear. If you touched the bottom it became muddy and murky. And it would get mossy. People from all over town came and swam in the Hafen Pond. Even as we got older, if you would call and order a pizza and try to tell them where you lived you'd say, "Do you know where the Hafen Pond is?"

"Yeah, we swim there all the time."

"Okay, well, we're the house at the Hafen Pond."

RM: So it was a big thing for the kids, for the whole valley, not just this end.

SF: Right, for the whole valley. Then Bowmans put in one of the first concrete swimming pools. Most of us learned to swim either in the pond or at Bowmans. Sometimes they'd have swimming parties and things for the kids.

RM: And how long did these swimming activities go on?

SF: Our pond went on for years. People were still swimming there until we built our house, which was in 1998. At that time my husband said, "The pond has become a liability; we need to fill it in." And that's what happened.

RM: But for all those years it was kind of a community swimming pool.

SF: It was a community swimming pool, yes. Even after we graduated and moved away, people were still coming here to swim. It was always full.

RM: At what age did you start working?

SF: I was in the seventh or eighth grade when I started chopping cotton.

RM: Was it an all-day thing?

SF: We'd start early in the morning and try to get done before the heat and usually quit about noon. If the weeds were really bad we'd go back in the evening for a couple more hours.

RM: Were you chopping down on the South Ranch?

SF: We worked on both ranches. We lived on what we called the North Ranch, or the home ranch. My parents bought it from a different branch of the Frehners.

RM: And when did the Frehners come in?

SF: I know that the house has a footprint from a Denny Frehner in 1957, so the Frehners were here in the mid-'50s.

RM: And they all came out of the Moapa area, is that right?

SF: Moapa Valley area. My father-in-law, Floyd Frehner (they called him Huck), was actually born in St. Thomas. And then Lake Mead flooded St. Thomas and they moved to the Overton area, but he was actually born in St. Thomas.

RM: Do you have any other thoughts on Imogene and Digger?

SF: Like I said, Digger was always a tease.

RM: He was very individualistic, wasn't he?

SF: Yes, he was. I always wondered how he acquired the nickname "Digger" because his name was Lenford. That would be interesting to find out about.

RM: What were other families in this area that you interfaced with?

SF: Lyle and Mary Christensen and their children. Lyle was a crop-duster and CAAS Road is Christianson Aerial Application Services. I can remember I was in eighth grade my dad picked me up at school because they needed a flagger for the crop-duster. He took me down to the South Ranch and I flagged for Lyle while he sprayed the field.

RM: What does a flagger do?

SF: The crop-duster sprays and you count off the rows and stand there with the flag so he knows where to start the next run.

I spent all afternoon out there flagging, and my dad forgot to pick me up. So I started walking, it's about a mile and a half back to the house. I got about halfway home, and somebody stopped and picked me up and took me home. We all did whatever we were needed to do.

RM: I was wondering about the pesticides; people weren't that aware of them in those days.

SF: That's true. We are talking over 30 years ago.

RM: Do you have any recollections of the nuclear testing program?

SF: No, I really don't. I think it was before my time.

RM: Do you remember people talking about it pro or con?

SF: I remember people talking about it, but more in recent years with many people saying they got sick from it. We always knew the Test Site was there and that it was the biggest employer for this area. It seemed like you either farmed, worked at the Test Site, you were a schoolteacher or you worked in Las Vegas.

RM: When you were a kid working in the fields, did they have immigrant labor?

SF: Not seasonal. There were a couple of families that lived on the ranch and worked full time. The Pallans, Turners, Mezas, and the Ortiz families all lived here for several years.

RM: Talk about the Turners.

SF: Francis "Dutch" and William "Bill" Turner and six children. They were Walt, Tom, Richard, Susan, Merlin and Lee. Susan was and still is one of my closest friends. Dutch was postmaster for many, many years and Bill worked at the Test Site.

At one time they had a ranch at the end of what is now Charleston Park Road. I can

remember herding cattle from here in the south end of the valley to there for pasture. We moved them on horseback because we didn't have horse trailers and that was the way we moved them. So we'd start early in the morning and it would take all day and we would just herd them across country.

RM: So you were a horsewoman or horsegirl?

SF: Yes, we rode a lot. During the old Pahrump Harvest Festival days, they had a gymkhana instead of a rodeo. We would ride in the gymkhana and because we did not have a horse trailer, we rode to the arena. On Thursday afternoon, my sister and I would ride our horses to Atha and Chuck Connely's, which was at the corner of Basin and Blagg. Saturday morning my parents would drop us off and we'd ride to the arena. We rode in the gymkhana and then back to Connely's. We would do it all over again on Sunday. On Monday after school, we would ride the bus to Connely's house and then we would ride our horses home.

RM: That's a long ways down.

SF: Yes. Sometimes a bunch of us would ride our horses "uptown" just to go to the store to get a soda or an ice cream.

RM: And uptown was down at Pop Buol's?

SF: I don't remember what it was called then. It was where the School District's offices are now, by Manse Elementary School.

RM: Just to get a soda or something? It must be five miles, at least.

SF: Oh, at least.

RM: That would be several of you, mostly girls?

SF: I don't think we hardly ever had any guys riding with us. All girls, just spending the day. Someone would say, "Let's go riding." and we would.

RM: And you would just be out playing all day with your horses? My daughter, Bambi,

used to do that in Tennessee. She had a little horse.

SF: There is nothing better. Again, the freedom. I look around and there are still horses in Pahrump, but not like then. And it's getting harder to find a place to ride here because we are getting more homes and more traffic. Back then, there wasn't much between us and "uptown."

RM: Talk about the freedom of childhood; I am fascinated by that.

SF: Well, it was great. It wasn't all play though, we had chores. We would get up in the morning, do our chores and then we were free for the rest of the day. We all played outside. I think at that time we had one TV station.

RM: And did it come in well?

SF: Yes, most of the time. Every Sunday evening was "The Wonderful World of Disney." We created our own fun. We had an open field behind our house and we played tag, football or softball and we swam in the pond. We had grape fights, we had a little grape arbor next to the pond; and moss fights, you'd gather moss from the pond.

The Andersens, Christensens, Pallans, and Turners—they were all families that we spent a lot of time with as children. Several of us learned to drive on an old Ford tractor.

At that time everybody really knew everybody and if you broke down, somebody stopped and took you home. Somebody knew you, somebody knew your parents. There was also the problem of everybody knowing everybody so if you were someplace you weren't supposed to be, or doing something you weren't supposed to do, Mom and Dad knew long before you ever got home. [Laughter]

Literally, everybody knew everybody and you didn't have to worry about anything. My parents were gone a lot—he was a state assemblyman. Once when they were away—I drove to the store. A friend of my parents went home and said to his wife, "Tim and Jackie

are out of home and Sandy's driving."

And the wife said, "Yeah?"

And the husband, "Well, I saw her at the store."

And the wife says, "It's okay."

The husband said "No, you know she's not supposed to be driving because she doesn't have her license yet."

And the wife says, "No, she turned 16 three months ago, it's okay."

So everything you did, somebody knew about it. We were allowed to drive on the ranch and we could drive to the other ranch before we got our licenses, but we didn't drive uptown until you got your license. It was good that everybody knew everybody, but on the other hand if you didn't behave someone would see you and report you.

We had no boundaries as far as where we could play or where we could roam. On the other hand, we didn't have sidewalks and we didn't have a lot of paved roads. I never learned to roller skate because there wasn't anyplace to skate. We did ride bicycles, but we just got tough and rode them on gravel roads.

RM: Did the girls play with dolls at all?

SF: We had dolls, but if the weather was nice you didn't really want to be inside.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: What would you describe as nice weather?

SF: To me, 90 degrees, sunny and no wind is perfect weather.

RM: And the heat didn't faze you as a kid?

SF: I'm sure that at times it probably did. One of my mother's rules was we could not swim until the temperature reached 100 degrees. So even if it was 95 or 98 and everybody in the world was swimming in our pond, we could not go swimming until the temperature reached 100 degrees. That was just one of her rules.

RM: What was her reason for the rule?

SF: She was afraid that anything less than that was too cold and we might get sick. So we had the 100 degrees rule. And we were rarely sick! [Chuckles]

RM: How many kids would there be in your pond on an active day?

SF: It was very easy to have 10 to 20 kids there. As time went on and more people found out about it, there could be 30 kids in there. It was a big playground. In fact, about two years after we built our house I saw some people walking around over here and I'm wondering, "What are they doing? Are they casing the place, or what?" So I asked them, "Can I help you?"

They said, "Well, we're looking for the pond; we came to swim."

And I said, "The pond has been filled in for two years."

"Oh, okay." And they got in their vehicle and drove away.

RM: How wide was the pond, would you say?

SF: It was about 60 by 80 and 5 to 6 feet deep. It was just clear water, crystal clear and very refreshing.

RM: Would you say that it was the central attraction of your play activities in the summertime?

SF: Oh yes, definitely.

RM: What did you do in the winter? Of course, you had your horses.

SF: We had our horses. As we got older we got involved in other school activities, but when I was going through grade school, first through eighth grade, they didn't have structured sports at the school for the girls; it was just boys' basketball.

But in the wintertime, weather permitting, we rode our horses, we built forts. We had forts out in the tamaracks. Between the bicycles, the horses, the forts and going to Las Vegas, too, we were busy.

All of the dentists and doctors were in Las Vegas, so if you had to go, you missed a whole day of school. It was an all-day trip because then you did your grocery shopping, you ran your errands, you made parts runs—for the farm. At that time, you shopped at Vegas Village. That was the place. We shopped at the one on Las Vegas Boulevard and then the one on Maryland Parkway. They closed down years ago.

RM: Was it kind of a general store?

SF: It was very similar to Wal-Mart. They sold groceries, clothing, TVs, auto parts and so on. Most people shopped in Vegas Village.

RM: Did you ever go to movies in Vegas?

SF: We did go to movies in Vegas. I can remember going to the old Huntridge Theater on East Charleston and there was a theater on south Las Vegas Blvd.

RM: Did you go to a lot of movies?

SF: No, just occasionally, it was usually a birthday treat. I can remember we went to a drive-in to see *Herbie the Lovebug*.

RM: The whole family would go or just the teenagers??

SF: The whole family would go or our parents would drop us off. Even though we had our license, we would rarely drive in Las Vegas as teenagers, not like they do now. In fact, I didn't really drive in Las Vegas until I moved there. Once in a while when I was in grade school, they would show a movie out here. They would project it on the side of the building at Manse Elementary. We would sit outside on folding chairs.

RM: Was there a lot of that or was it just an occasional thing?

SF: It was just occasional. So on the one hand there wasn't a lot to do in Pahrump as a kid, but there was a lot to do. We played a lot of board games and cards. And like I said, we were just outside. In fact, one time I was going to try to learn to play the piano; I had an older sister who was going to teach me. That didn't work because I'd much rather have been riding my horse or swimming or whatever than practicing. So I never did learn.

And nobody locked their doors at that time; nobody took the keys out of their vehicles; nobody locked their vehicles. It's like Mom said, "The truck's sitting there, and if the neighbors need it, they know to borrow it." And that's the way we lived our life. We never had a locked door when I was a kid growing up; I didn't know any different. When I moved to Las Vegas, I had a hard time locking my doors. It was a new experience. [Laughs]

RM: Was there a lot of sharing in times of need? All the way from borrowing some baking powder or helping if somebody is having a hard time and their family is sick?

SF: Yes, there was a lot of sharing. If someone was growing a garden, they would share. If you were sick someone was tending your kids for you. There wasn't a lot of money back in those days. I mean, we did not wear name brands. You would go shopping for school clothes at the beginning of the school year. By that time, we had six kids in our family and when you're farming and raising six kids you have to stretch the dollars as far as you can.

We raised our own beef and pork so we always had food on the table. But there wasn't a lot of extra, either. If somebody needed something, you would share. I think everybody was a lot more self-sufficient.

RM: Were there status differences in the kids—like, one father owns the ranch and the other is the worker?

SF: No, I don't think so. The Pallan family lived here and their dad worked for my dad and we were very good friends.

RM: Talk about the Pallans.

SF: Andrea and Castulo were Mom and Dad Pallan.

RM: Were they Hispanic?

SF: Yes. And there were eleven children. I believe four of them still live here in Pahrump and the rest live in Las Vegas so they're all fairly close. I don't remember when they moved to Pahrump, but Jolie and I started first grade together and we graduated high school together. We were cheerleaders together and we were friends the entire time growing up. It was the same with our younger sisters. They're still good friends to this day.

RM: Do those two girls still live in the valley?

SF: Yes, Jolie and Rachel still live here. I know that they still have a brother and sister here too. We would go to their house and Andy would be making fresh homemade tortillas—and man, if you could get there on tortilla day . . . there was just something about a fresh homemade tortilla. It was a real treat. They were a hard-working family. Castulo worked for Tim for many, many years.

RM: How do you spell Pallan, do you know?

SF: Yes, it is spelled P-A-L-L-A-N. We swam together and we worked in the fields together. They were always a part of our lives. . . . Amelia would baby-sit us.

RM: Can you name the Pallan children?

SF: I should think so! Amelia, Ricardo, Manuel, Alvaro, Abelardo, Olga, Yolanda (Jolie), Becky, Rachel, and the twins, Norma and Larry.

RM: Why don't we just give the rest of the kids' names so it's there for the historical records? Start with the Bowman kids.

SF: There are five: Gary, Lorraine, Janet, Mark and Karen. They were the children of Perry and Norma Bowman.

RM: And then the Andersen children?

SF: Digger and Imogene had five daughters: Carol, Phyllis, Myrna, Connie, and Maureen.

RM: And the Christensens?

SF: The Christensens, Lyle and Mary. They also had five children: Rosemary, Mitch, Jolynn, Hans, and Wade.

RM: It was a rich network of friendships.

SF: A family of friendships.

RM: Were there kind of two communities in Pahrump, one on the south and then the other separated by the Pahrump Ranch over where Button Ford is?

SF: I know that there were families and we would see the kids at school but because of the distance we didn't really play together a lot.

RM: And so the kids at the other end of the valley were not apt to come to your pond.

SF: They did as they got old enough to drive and sometimes they would ride their horses or their bikes.

RM: Did most of the kids live at the south end of the valley? Maybe there weren't that many kids down at that end.

SF: When I was in school we had people living all over the valley, just not very many. It

seemed like there was just so many of us right here, between the families I've told you about, that we made up a good portion of the classroom.

RM: How many kids would be in your classroom, typically?

SF: I want to say first and second grade combined; there were probably 18 of us. There just wasn't that many.

RM: And you went through school as what they call a cohort. How many of those 18 did you end up graduating with?

SF: There were four in my first grade class that graduated high school together—myself, Jolie Pallan, Kaye Connely, and Henry “Butch” Neth.

RM: And were you close?

SF: We were very close, yes. Butch was a brother to all of us and three of the four still live here in Pahrump; Kaye lives in Las Vegas.

RM: And the others moved and that kind of thing?

SF: They moved away and others would come. You look back now and, like I said, we didn't have a lot of TV, we didn't have the computers, but we had friendships that I don't think you can develop as easily when you spend a lot of time in front of a TV or a computer. I am not saying people don't develop solid friendships now, but I don't think they develop as easily.

We had what we called our Aggravation—the board game Aggravation, we had tournaments and there was myself and Susan Turner, her sister Merlin and my sister Paula. Susan and I were partners and Merlin and Paula were partners. We would play in the summertime until 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning. “Just one more time, we have to win one more, we have to win one more,” and we would keep score to see who had the most wins. Most people today would say, “What is Aggravation? Can I play it on the computer?” And

card games—we played Hearts and Spades until all hours of the night. During school days you had to go to school and get your homework done. You just created your own entertainment and there was plenty of it out there.

Even today when I hear somebody in Pahrump say, “There is nothing for the kids here to do,” I get so upset because yes there is! Look around! In that day we did not have AYSO, Little League, bowling lanes; we did not have the high school sports and the Skate Zone and the casinos that have the arcades in them. None of that existed, but we were always busy doing something and more times than not, it was outside. I think we were all healthier because we were outside so much.

RM: Yes. What caused it to change in your view, and when did it start changing?

SF: Good question. Computers are in schools now; the computer age, I think, is when it started changing. I can remember in ninth grade we took typing, you learned how to type. One day recently I said something to my nephew, who is 25 about a typewriter and carbon paper and he said, “What’s carbon paper?” and, “And how do you use a typewriter?”

I said, “If you can use a computer, you can use a typewriter,” but he had no idea what carbon paper was. So I told him, “In the days before computers if you typed a letter and wanted to change it, you retyped the entire the letter. If you needed a copy of it, you used carbon paper because there weren’t copy machines and there weren’t fax machines.” I sound like I grew up in the Dark Ages. [Laughs]

RM: Yes, and it hasn’t been that long ago. When did the transformation from this almost idyllic kind of community start changing?

SF: I graduated high school in ’76 and moved to Las Vegas and it was some time after that, in my opinion. The valley started growing and people got busier.

RM: Did you graduate from Shoshone?

SF: No, I only went to ninth grade in Shoshone. My older sisters and brother graduated from Shoshone.

I've read several of the interviews you've done with people from Pahrump and it seems like they were all with older people, which is great.

RM: Yes, and with you it's the next generation, which is important. So you grew up when cotton was king. And when they closed the gin that was the end of cotton.

SF: I don't know if they closed the gin and quit growing cotton or quit growing cotton and closed the gin.

RM: While I am thinking about it, talk about Walt William's son.

SF: They had two sons—Rick and Mark. Rick was in the service and was killed. He was the oldest. I knew Mark better because he closer in age to us and we spent more time with him.

RM: He lived in Vegas didn't he? Or did he go to school out here?

SF: He never went to school out here. Walt Williams bought the Pahrump Ranch and so they would come out and check things and spend the day. I first met them through my parents. And the relationship continued to grow.

RM: Is Mark about your age?

SF: He is about 10 years older than I am. My sister Paula and I would go to Las Vegas and visit our dad, Dave, and we would stay with Walt and Nancy Williams. We'd spend the weekends there. Dad was a very good friend of theirs, and we would swim and he would barbeque. Mark had moved away from home, but he was still in Las Vegas part of the time. We were Mark's little sisters.

There is another family, the Woner family, that was here then. Frank was the foreman for the Pahrump Ranch and they lived there.

RM: Talk more about Walt Williams—I don't think I have any information about his wife, Nancy.

SF: Paula and I called Nancy S-O-M, which stood for Sweet Ole Mom. Her daughter-in-law started that and my sister and I ended up calling her that, too. She would say "Nancy Anne's Home for Wayward Girls"—she would tease us when we were there. Nancy was always "dressed." I never saw her in jeans and sneakers.

RM: Was she involved in kind of the higher echelon in Vegas?

SF: Yes. She was very active in the Mesquite Club and in the Republicans' Committee.

RM: What would dressed up be to you guys?

SF: When we were younger you got dressed up to go on an airplane.

RM: That's right. People don't remember that.

SF: We wore dresses on the airplane when we went to visit our grandparents. As we got a little older, we wore our best pants and prettiest blouse.

RM: What did you wear here then?

SF: Around here to play in we wore our jeans or shorts and sneakers with a T-shirt or blouse. Even now when I go to shows in Las Vegas I look around at what the people are wearing and you see cut-offs now and blue jeans; the whole society has changed.

RM: People never dress up.

SF: They never dress up. But I can remember that men always wore suits on the airplanes and ladies wore dresses.

RM: I can remember feeling like I was in high class when I was flying, that it was a snobbish thing to do, almost.

SF: And it was a definite treat to go to dinner in Las Vegas. We didn't go to the shows in Las Vegas when we were kids. But even to the movie theater, if you were going to wear

jeans you wore your best pair. We had our play clothes and our school clothes and when you came home from school, you changed your clothes.

RM: We did the same thing. What did you wear to school?

SF: We didn't have to wear dresses but we wore them sometimes. We would wear pants to school, but they didn't have holes in them, they weren't stained, they weren't cut-offs. Levi's were okay. We didn't have a dress code back then, but parents dressed their children because they wanted them to look respectful, they wanted them to look prideful.

RM: Where did you buy your clothes?

SF: Vegas Village, J C Penney or Sears. As we got older there were the malls in Vegas. But I so remember the play clothes and the school clothes—the first thing you did when you walked in that door was change your clothes.

RM: I still do it.

SF: Me, too. Parents had pride in their homes because they worked hard. So they taught their children about pride and respect. You had respect for other people's property because you had respect for your own. We didn't have graffiti and vandalism. I think as a society we have lost that.

RM: So you have graffiti and all of that in Pahrump now?

SF: Yes, you see it on the block walls. billboards and buildings. At that time if anybody had been caught doing that . . . if I caught Billy spray-painting a block wall, I would punish Billy, and his parents would punish him. When we were in school, if you got in trouble at school, you got in trouble when you got home. I had my hands rapped more than once with a ruler for talking in class, talking without having permission.

RM: So they had some punishment?

SF: With the ruler on the back of your hands. The principal had a paddle and he used it.

And, like I say, not only did you get in trouble at school, but you got in trouble at home.

RM: Would you get a spanking or a lecture?

SF: I got both and it didn't harm me. I think that is another part of what is wrong with today's society; the children have no discipline. They can get away with anything because they know they're not going to get into trouble so who cares?

CHAPTER THREE

RM: What grades did the Pahrump School have?

SF: When I was here it was first through eighth and the high school kids went to school in Shoshone. I went to school in Shoshone for ninth grade. We had two buses at that time in Pahrump. One bus for the north end of the valley and one bus for the south end. The buses would meet at the elementary school and all of the high school kids got on our bus and we went to Shoshone.

Our bus driver was also the math teacher and our next-door neighbor. His name was Rick Howell. His wife's name was Sue and we taught her how to drive. He would come out in the mornings and start up the bus, then go back in his house and get his coffee and his books. When we heard the bus start up, we had about five minutes to get across the street and on the bus. We listened to 8-track tapes (okay, I'm dating myself.)

RM: What did you listen to?

SF: Neil Diamond, Credence Clearwater, The Who, The Doobie Brothers, Three Dog Night—whoever was popular at that time.

RM: What time did you leave in the morning?

SF: I think we left like at 7:00. There were a couple of times when we would almost get to Shoshone and the little Amargosa River would be flooding across Highway 372. He wouldn't cross it so he would turn the bus around and we would come back home; we wouldn't go to school that day.

RM: And there'd be no math teacher.

SF: And there was no math teacher that day for the kids that were there from Shoshone and Death Valley.

RM: Where was the Shoshone ~~school then~~?

SF: Where it is now—Death Valley High School, there in Shoshone.

RM: Was it grades one through ~~twelve~~?

SF: The high school was just ~~nine through twelve~~. They did have a Death Valley Elementary school, so that was first ~~through eighth~~.

RM: How many kids in the high ~~school~~. ~~would~~ you guess?

SF: My ninth grade class had ~~about 50 students~~. There were a total of 190 to 200. For my sophomore year, they were building a ~~high school~~ here in Pahrump, but it didn't get finished. They hadn't renewed the California contract ~~because they thought our school would be finished~~. I was one of the first classes that went to double sessions at the elementary school.

So my sophomore year was at the elementary school and we had about 170 students. My oldest step-sister was one of my teachers in my freshman and sophomore years. My junior and senior years were at the high school. We had 30 seniors the year I graduated.

RM: That's quite a few.

SF: Yeah, then you look at it now. [Laughs]

RM: How do you look back on your year commuting to Shoshone?

SF: That's just what we did. It wasn't like you had a choice or an option; you had to go to school, that's where the school was.

RM: It was a long four hours a day, wasn't it?

SF: It was a long day, especially for the kids that lived in Pahrump and played high school sports.

RM: Did you study on the bus?

SF: Sometimes, probably not much.

RM: What did the students who played sports do?

SF: They would stay after ~~school to practice~~ and for games. The ones that were old enough to drive would just haul a ~~carload to~~ and from practice. Everybody all rode together; whoever had their license became a ~~taxi for all~~ their buddies. That was another thing—if you were late and missed the bus you ~~didn't go to school~~ that day because your parents were not going to drive you to Shoshone.

RM: Was Shoshone about the ~~same size as~~ it is now? It doesn't seem very big to me.

SF: It isn't very big. You had ~~people that~~ lived in Shoshone but students came as far as Death Valley, Death Valley Junction ~~and Tecopa~~.

RM: Did they have social functions ~~like dances~~ on Friday night or anything like that?

SF: They did; but there again, ~~unless your boyfriend~~ had a license or you had a license to drive over there . . . the parents would drive over for football and basketball games but they didn't really drive over for any other ~~social~~ activities. And like I said, I only went there for the one year, just in ninth grade. If we wanted to go watch the football game or a basketball game, my parents would take us or you rode with somebody.

RM: In terms of when the sap starts to rise, so to speak, among the kids at Pahrump, did the boys and the girls here date each other or was that too close and they would date from somewhere else?

SF: By the time I got into my junior year we had new people moving into the valley so you weren't dating your brother, so to speak.

RM: So kids tended not to date people that they had grown up with; is that a fair statement? Or did they kind of have a bond from growing up together and then easily form more of a romantic relationship?

SF: Some did. A few started dating each other in eighth grade and dated all through high school. But others waited.

RM: Did Pahrump kids tend to ~~marry~~ Pahrump kids?

SF: At that time, yes.

RM: Did they kind of form ~~these pair bonds~~ fairly young?

SF: A lot of them were formed ~~in the eighth~~ and ninth grades. A lot of the kids I grew up with or knew started dating in ~~eighth grade~~ and some of them did get married. Others dated through high school and didn't get ~~married~~. Some waited until after school to seriously start dating and get married.

RM: And the kids who waited ~~tend to still be married~~?

SF: Yes and no. I don't think it ~~was any~~ different than anywhere else. Some marriages last and some don't.

RM: What do you see as the reason ~~why those marriages~~ tended not to last?

SF: A lot of reasons. I think in ~~some cases one~~ of them grew up and the other one didn't. Or maybe they did decide that "We've ~~known each other~~ too long, it's like being married to my brother or my sister or my cousin." ~~What makes any marriage last?~~ I think it is different factors.

RM: I've read that in the kibbutzes in Israel ~~they~~ tend not to marry to people they've grown up with in the community. They ~~marry~~ outside of the community.

SF: There's a problem with marrying inside a small community because on the one hand, you know everything about this person: but on the other hand, you know everything about this person. It's good and bad. You know their faults and you know their family, how they were raised and what they were like, but on the other hand you know their family and you know. . . .

RM: I wonder what it would be like to have a bond with someone you've known since almost day one. It's got to be different than meeting somebody when you're 25 or 30 or 40.

SF: I'm sure. Like I said, the girlfriend bonds that we made at that age, most of them are still very strong.

RM: Are the boy bonds as enduring. do you know?

SF: I don't know. I don't think the bonding with the men is the same as the bonds that women have.

RM: Women are more social. And why is that?

SF: I think men work all day and come home and they just want to relax. In many cases the women don't work outside of the home so they want to get out of the house and go out and socialize.

RM: I think it's deeper than that. I think women are innately more social. They read other people's feelings better, they're more sensitive and you can just go down the line.

SF: But isn't it true that back in the day it wasn't macho for a man to show his feelings and it wasn't macho for a man to cry. As boys, they were taught that men don't cry and they don't play with dolls. Men play with trucks and they are tough.

RM: Yes, but I think that if you go even earlier than that, to almost babies, girls are more interested in reading other people better than the little boys.

SF: But women were raised to be nurturing and girls played dolls and they mothered, you know, and it was kind of always a natural instinct.

RM: Well, talk about growing up in Pahrump as a girl versus what you saw as the boys growing up. Was there a big division?

SF: In my opinion there wasn't a big division. But we didn't have a lot of boys around, either. The Andersens had five girls. My own family had five girls and one boy. At that time the Turners had two girls and one boy and the Pallans had more girls our age than boys.

RM: Were the boys in your peer group kind of special when there were so few of them?

SF: I don't think they were.

RM: So you don't see a lot of difference in what you experienced growing up here as compared to what a boy experienced?

SF: I didn't, because we rode horses and we worked in the fields. I've helped deliver calves and lambs. I have helped brand and vaccinate cattle. But my life was on a farm and I did what had to be done.

RM: Would you say that there was less of a firm line between women's roles and men's roles, that they were kind of blended?

SF: For my life, they were blended. But girls outnumbered boys. When I was in seventh and eighth grade we would have school dances and the girls danced together because either the boys didn't want to dance or there just were more girls.

RM: Do you still ride?

SF: I don't. Sometimes I miss it but now I'd rather ride a four-wheeler.

RM: But you're still pretty much an outdoors person?

SF: I love the outdoors. My husband is a hunter. And now I go on hunting trips with him. I don't hunt, I just like to travel. Duane is also an outdoors person and he had horses. His family had a ranch in Alamo and that was a part of our life. Because I had been raised here, I knew what to do and how to help and that was just another interest that we had in common.

CHAPTER FOUR

SF: I was talking earlier about the Harvest Festival; it was a real community project. A few days before the big gymkhana all of us kids would gather at the arena and pick rocks. I guess they decided that kids with rakes and wheelbarrows were better than a tractor. There would be several families there. We had to pick up all of the rocks so that the arena would be smooth. There was also a delicious deep pit barbeque. A couple of days before the barbeque, we would be there helping to wrap the meat in tin foil, bundle it in burlap and put it in the big pit.

RM: And that was part of the bonding, too.

SF: That was part of the bonding. We'd be joking and laughing and carrying on, and after you cleaned the arena you were treated to a hot dog and a soda. Kids in the city just have a different life. I feel that I was very fortunate to have grown up here and at the time I did.

But I can also remember as a kid people would say, "Where do you live?" And we'd say, "Pahrump," and they would make fun of the name or whatever. So after a while we would just say that we lived near Las Vegas.

But as we got older and would say, "Well, we live in Pahrump," people had started hearing of it and they'd say, "Oh, yeah, we know where that is," or "Do you know so-and-so?"

RM: You mentioned Slater while the tape was off. Why don't you talk about them?

SF: His name was George Slater and he managed the cotton gin. He had a son named Mark and I don't remember how long they lived here. As you drive down Wilson Road there is a little sign there that says "Slater" and part of their original house is still there. Somebody

has added on to it.

Mark was the tallest kid in our class and he wore glasses. We would swing at school and one time he was swinging really high and he jumped out of the swings and broke his glasses. It was devastating because you didn't just run to the optometrist. So then he had them taped together with white tape.

RM: And your dad came up to run the gin?

SF: Yes, my dad Dave. Before that the cotton was being hauled to California for the ginning process. My father-in-law used to come to Pahrump and haul cotton to the gin. When I met him as an adult I was surprised to learn that he had been to Pahrump. He knew me as a small child and he remembered my parents.

RM: When did your biological dad leave Pahrump and where did he go?

SF: I am not sure what year he left. He moved to Las Vegas. He also lived in Arizona, Alaska, and the Caribbean. When he was in Las Vegas, he worked for the Hughes Corporation and he moved to Anchorage and managed the Hughes Aviation department there. He moved from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska. At that time my sister Paula lived in Kodiak, Alaska. I visited them both that year.

He moved around a lot. Maybe that is where I got the travel "bug" from. My husband jokes that if somebody calls our house and says, "Sandy" and "go" my bags are packed.

RM: We started talking a little bit about Walt Williams and you were talking about Walt's wife. Is there any more you'd want to say about her?

SF: She always made us feel very welcome. She had two sons and Paula and I were her daughters; she loved us like we were her own daughters. Going to her house was like going on a vacation, even if it was for the weekend. She waited on us and cooked for us. She was very important to us and she was glad to have a place for us to come and stay. Dad had an

apartment, but it was just more comfortable at their house. We would swim and they would take us on picnics. But their life changed dramatically when Rick was killed.

RM: Did they live in a nice house?

SF: Yes. They lived in the Charleston/Oakey/Rancho area. It was a wealthy area at that time. They had a pool, a beautiful yard, and a lovely home.

RM: What about Walt—what do you recall about him?

SF: We didn't spend as much time with him as we did with Nancy. During the day he'd be at the office. He'd come in the evenings for dinner or we would go out to dinner together.

One of their favorite places to go was the Hilltop House on Rancho in Las Vegas.

Nancy loved to have frog legs. It was a dining experience to go to dinner with them because they liked fine food and we tried a lot of different things, like quail.

RM: Did you ever get down to the Pahrump Ranch?

SF: I did get down to the Pahrump Ranch but I was very young. I remember one year they had a community barbeque there. My years of remembering them are at their home in Vegas. We would go to the Pahrump Ranch to play with the Woner kids. Our parents were friends with Frank and Carol Woner. They had six children: Carrie, Janet, Laurie, Jody, Ben and Glen. I don't know when they moved to Pahrump, but they're also long-time residents. Most of them still live here in Pahrump or close by. Frank was also a deputy sheriff.

One time Paula and I flew in from visiting our grandparents, and when we got off the airplane—nobody was there to pick us up. Then we saw the sheriff and a deputy in their uniforms. They were after us. Paula and I were very embarrassed. People were staring and talking about us. We don't know if they thought we were runaways or criminals. They were going to Las Vegas; we needed a ride home so we came home in the sheriff's car. [Laughs] It was Frank and Ed Siri.

RM: Did you know Roland Wiley at all?

SF: I met him but I did not know him. And I've been out to Cathedral Canyon.

RM: What was your perception of Cathedral Canyon?

SF: I thought it was a little strange and maybe eccentric. But it was neat to go and visit. A lot of hard work, time, and money went into it. We were there at night one time and it was lit up and it was beautiful.

RM: Did you go there often?

SF: I've been there four or five times.

Another great time was when we would get together for picnics whenever Interminent Springs would run. My parents and their friends and their kids would load up in trucks, Jeeps, or go on horses and hike up to the spring. Those that felt like a hard walk would hike to the bottom where the spring comes up out of the ground. It was just this big rocky area and water bubbled up. Whenever it rains a lot the spring runs and comes to Highway 160.

RM: Where does it cross Highway 160?

SF: Between Trout Canyon and Lovell Canyon, in that area.

RM: Is it a lot of water?

SF: Yes. It doesn't happen very often, though.

RM: Did you get out into the mountains much?

SF: Not as a kid with my family. One time we had this great idea that we were going to go gather firewood and so we took the pickup out there. It was a lot of work and a little wood.

Pahrump had a riding club and we would have trail rides. If you didn't have a horse you could drive your pickup. A couple of times we stayed up at Les Adams's place so that would have been in Carpenter Canyon. We would ride horses up the canyon and then that

night there'd be a big cookout, campfire, and stories around the campfire. The next morning there would be a big breakfast and we would head back down the canyon. The trail rides were a big deal.

RM: How many were in the club, would you say?

SF: About 40 people.

RM: And what time of the year would you do that?

SF: In the spring or fall. There was also a big Mother's Day breakfast ride. We would ride out to the base of the mountain, near the end of Mesquite Road. The riding club was very active. People that didn't ride would bring the support wagons with the food and water. It was a real family event.

RM: So horse riding was an important thing in the valley and it was a recreational thing.

SF: Yes, we used ours for recreation and herding and working cattle.

RM: Did most people kind of have horses?

SF: A lot of us had horses and we usually had extras. Chuck and Atha Connely had lots of horses and I spent a lot of time growing up there with their daughter Kaye. That's where I learned to ride. Kaye and I spent a lot of time together and took turns staying at each other's house. Her grandpa was Bob Owens. Bob also had a lot of horses. A lot of horses also meant a lot of work. It would take an hour or longer to feed and water all of the horses. Cleaning corrals was hard work and not much fun.

RM: Were they quarter horses or any particular breed?

SF: A lot of quarter horse-thoroughbred mixes, but mostly quarter horses.

RM: Do you know a lot about horses?

SF: I know some. That was another thing—when we were younger we had to learn to ride bareback before my parents would buy us a saddle. We had to be able to sit a horse and prove

that we were serious about riding. I had two really good horses while I was growing up.

RM: A horse or a pony?

SF: Horses; we never had ponies. My first horse was named Goldie. She was older when I got her and I had her until she died. My second horse was a surprise Christmas present. My mom and dad bought her from Chuck and Atha. Her name was Four-Sevens. She was a big sorrel mare. She had gotten loose that morning and my dad and brother spent an hour trying to catch her. She didn't like men. We didn't rodeo but we rode in gymkhanas. We would ride in the barrels, poles—all of the timed events that have a pattern.

RM: Was gymkhana mainly a girls' thing?

SF: I think more girls participated than boys did. My dad was the announcer at a lot of the shows and many times my mom was the show secretary.

RM: Well, you must have known how to handle a horse when it gets fractious and everything.

SF: I was pretty fortunate; I had some good horses. But I also had my share of spills.

RM: What do you think of horse whisperer and that technique?

SF: I think it's real. There are a lot of different techniques out there, but many of them are very similar. Even with a dog, you can get more with patience and kindness than you can with a whip and beating them.

RM: What was the general theory on horses among the people of Pahrump who had horses? Was it more of a horse whisperer type or what did they think about horses and what's the best way to handle them?

SF: It depended on the individual person. I know one man who actually took a shovel to his horse and beat him over the head with a shovel because the horse had acted up.

RM: Did that work?

SF: No, but it didn't stop him from trying it. I don't think at the time that people gave much thought to it. They probably thought horses were like their kids and they were supposed to mind and do what they were told.

RM: So that was the theory on kids—you would mind and do as you're told.

SF: And you're supposed to do as you're told because we taught you right from wrong and this is what we expect of you.

RM: Talk about Bob Owens; did you know him?

SF: He was my friend Kaye's grandfather. Bob was a very soft-spoken man, a small man. He had a way with horses and people. He had a twinkle of laughter in his eye. He raised horses and birds. He was another hard worker. It seems like everybody was a hard worker and not afraid of hard work.

RM: Right. You couldn't survive out here if you didn't. Harry Ford told me that originally Owens's grazing area was around Mount Sterling and over toward Mercury on the Test Site.

SF: Yes. That's another connection that I have. My husband's family used to have cattle and they would run them on Bob's range.

RM: Let's talk about your move to Las Vegas. You were a Pahrump girl—what was in your mind when you decided to go there?

SF: In 1976 when I graduated high school there wasn't a lot going on in Pahrump and you either went away to college or you went away to work. I chose to go to work. I started working part-time for UPS, United Parcel Service. I worked part-time for two years and then I was promoted to a full-time position. I audited trailers and sorted packages. I filed the fuel reports for all of the trucks. I worked as a customer counter clerk and took in packages; I answered telephones and worked as a cashier. I held several different positions. I rose up in the ranks and I worked there for ten years.

RM: What was it like moving from Pahrump, where you'd always lived, to Vegas?

SF: I was moving to Las Vegas with another girl from here. Nobody would rent an apartment to us because we were just barely 18, had no experience. We finally found an apartment that we could afford and my mom cosigned for us, said she'd be responsible for the apartment. It was near Maryland Parkway and Desert Inn, behind Sunrise Hospital.

My friend was working part-time and going to school. We lived there for two years and she moved to Colorado. I moved into another apartment and then bought a house. I was making good money and knew how to save my money. I didn't have a lot of expenses so I was able to purchase my first home in 1980. It was off of Jones and Smoke Ranch, in that area.

RM: So you were just really a kid, 22 years old?

SF: Yes. I lived there for 13 years. I had aunts and uncles and cousins who lived in Vegas but the friends I made were the friends I worked with. We had a great group that used to go snow skiing together.

RM: Up on Charleston?

SF: Up on Charleston, but we usually went to Brianhead, Utah. And we really liked going line-dancing. There were some great country bars in Las Vegas.

Having grown up in Pahrump I knew what Vegas was all about because we'd been there often enough. I wasn't into the gambling scene. I didn't get overwhelmed by the lights and the crowds—it was just Vegas.

But like I said, when I first moved to Vegas I had a really difficult time locking the door to my apartment and taking the keys out of my car and locking my car because I hadn't had to do that and I hadn't been raised that way. The buffets were a treat. We didn't have them in Pahrump and we really didn't know what they were all about. We lived there three

years before we were old enough to gamble. By then it was no big deal.

RM: So the buffets were something you explored in Vegas?

SF: Yes, and just going out to restaurants to eat because Pahrump didn't have that much in the way of restaurants. And the shopping; it was all new and exciting. We could go to the store 24 hours a day. And the libraries—I still use the library.

RM: What phase of its development was Pahrump in in '78? The gin was probably closed by then, wasn't it?

SF: I'm not sure when they closed the gin. I know my parents were still growing and selling hay until 2005.

RM: So subdivision, basically, became a growth engine in Pahrump—and that really made a huge transition, didn't it?

SF: It did. Preferred Equities was here before I graduated. Calvada had a small grocery store and a nice restaurant. It was the nicest in Pahrump at that time.

RM: What were the businesses that were here when you left?

SF: Mankins' Texaco gas station and mini-mart. There was one bank and an ice cream parlor. Saddle West Restaurant and Casino and the Calvada Restaurant, bar, and grocery store. I think that Dodge's Market was here then.

RM: There wasn't a doctor, or was there?

SF: [Laughs] We had a family doctor in Las Vegas that we went to. I had gangrene in my left foot when I was a senior in high school—I got stepped on by a cow. Actually she jumped over a gate and when she landed she stepped on my foot and it developed into gangrene. And one of the reasons gangrene set in is because the doctor here at the time was not providing adequate medical care. And when I did go to Las Vegas to see our family doctor, he put me in the hospital and said I might lose my foot because I had gangrene. I was in the hospital for

a week and they were pumping me full of antibiotics and draining my foot. I just got off crutches in time for graduation.

RM: And when did you move back to Pahrump?

SF: In 1998. My husband had been involved in his family business in Las Vegas and the business was sold to his brother. I also worked there. When the business was sold, Duane and I were not part of the package and we had to find other jobs. He went to work for Las Vegas Paving driving truck and I went to work for a graphics firm.

My parents decided to develop the Artesia Subdivision, which was the "South Ranch" land. We agreed to move to Pahrump and start a construction company.

Duane had wanted to move anyway. He was born and raised in Las Vegas and had lived there all of his life. He was ready for a change.

So he did all the underground work for the Hafen Commercial Center building. Then he put in the underground utilities and built the roads in Artesia. He moved out here in June of '98. He would either come home on weekends or I would come out here. We had horses and I had a job and couldn't just leave. We sold our house in December and I moved out here. We moved into our current home in July of 1999.

RM: When you look at Pahrump now versus what it was when you were a kid, what goes through your mind?

SF: When you were in the grocery store when I was a kid, you knew everybody and everybody knew you. It seemed like people were friendlier then and they had more time for each other. I think Pahrump has a lot of growth problems. Its growth has obviously slowed down right now, but it has grown a lot in the last few years. It just seems like our services cannot keep up with our population.

Growth is a good thing on the one hand, but on the other hand it creates more

problems because when you have more growth, you have more crime. And we all know that crime in Pahrump has risen. We have more break-ins and we have more burglaries. You lock your doors now and you don't leave the keys in the vehicle.

RM: You do lock your doors in Pahrump and it's not just paranoia?

SF: No, it's not just paranoia. Of course, they can break into a locked door just as easily as they can an unlocked door.

RM: Like they say, it keeps the honest out.

SF: That's exactly right. On the other hand, there are a lot of services here now that weren't here when I was growing up. The amenities are nice, but the growing pains are a pain.

I personally still like to go to Las Vegas. I like the variety of things that are available in Las Vegas that are not available here. Wal-Mart has done a wonderful job for Pahrump, Wal-Mart is great, but I would like to see something else come to Pahrump. I'm sure everybody else feels that same way. And as far as the growth in Pahrump, I get really irritated with the people who say, "I bought this house next to the dairy and I've got a lot of flies." Well, the flies were there when you bought the house, the dairy was there when you bought the house; that didn't change. And the people who live on a gravel road and say, "Oh, I am so tired of the dust." The road was gravel when they bought the house; what did they expect?

We didn't have those complaints before we started growing. I think a lot of people came from the cities and they want the city amenities. But they came here to get away from the city, so it's a catch-22.

I get irritated with some things, but Pahrump has a lot of nice things. You can still feel safe out walking and being at the park. To take care of the growth I think we need more

necessities. I think we need more police officers, paramedics, and firefighters. We have a hospital, but I think it is understaffed. I think we need more doctors, but it takes more people to attract more doctors. Home Depot has opened and we'll have to wait and see how that turns out.

RM: Looking down the road, how do you see Pahrump's future?

SF: I have a lot of mixed feelings about how I see Pahrump's future. Being the daughter of a developer and business owner I have seen the difficulties that businesses have to go through to get a project off the ground. The impact fees, permits, and licenses that a business has to pay to get started are frightening. I think we're scaring the businesses away.

RM: You mean any kind of business or real estate development?

SF: Any kind of business, the big businesses. The impact fees that Home Depot had to pay to get a store here were unbelievable; it was an exorbitant amount. It's that way with any business that wants to come out here. So I think in that respect, we are limiting ourselves as to what could happen here.

If we want the businesses to come, we need to make ourselves more user friendly; and I don't know the answer to that. People say we need different county commissioners or a new town board; we need this or that, but let's make what we have work.

RM: What do you see 25 years from now? What will Pahrump look like?

SF: I see it going one of two ways. I see it booming and having 100,000 people here. Or I see it stagnating. I think this crunch we are in will last three to five years. I hope our leaders can take this down time to come up with a plan and prepare for future growth. There needs to be a way to make our town more willing to work with new businesses and make it more attractive to them. I also think that water could become an issue and that will help decide the future of our town.

RM: Is the water table dropping?

SF: Depends on who you ask. I know there are some artesian wells that are still flowing. Some people say we have more water now because there is less farming. Other people say we have less water now because we have more people. I don't know the answer to that. I can see once we get past this crunch, people wanting to move to Pahrump. There are about 40,000 people here now; I can see that number doubling.

RM: Well, you've talked wonderfully. Thank you very much.

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